

Abstract 545

TITLE: The Evaluation of HIV/AIDS Prevention Programs: The D.C. Experience

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ISSUE: The D.C. Department of Health's Administration for HIV/AIDS is developing an evaluation initiative as a response to CDC's recommendation to monitor and assess HIV prevention programs. This initiative has met different reactions. Within the agency, evaluation was viewed as an important priority; however, the paucity of resources and expertise has posed a great challenge. In the community, different levels of resistance were initially experienced.

SETTING: HIV prevention interventions provided by community-based organizations in the District of Columbia.

PROJECT: To address the specific issue, the Administration for HIV/AIDS initiated the following: 1) development and testing of evaluation tool kit to be used as a standard reporting tool; 2) development of evaluation database using CDC data set; 3) provision of technical assistance in the development of prevention curricula.

RESULT: The evaluation initiative has identified specific needs within the agency and the community regarding evaluation, such as 1) inadequacy of the agency's infrastructure to conduct evaluation; 2) majority of community-based organizations are hesitant to conduct evaluation because of technical knowledge, perceptions about evaluation and lack of resources; 3) need to enhance knowledge about evaluation and its proper place in planning prevention programs; 4) need to develop a coordinated approach to evaluate programs on the agency level; 5) need to identify and develop outcome and impact variables to evaluate prevention programs specific to the programs specific to the program needs of D.C.

LESSONS LEARNED: Evaluation needs more than what meets the eye. Evaluation has to be carefully planned to be successful. DC's evaluation initiative is evolving. Baby steps are being undertaken to carefully create the paradigm and craft the tools to assess the effectiveness of D.C.'s HIV/AIDS prevention programs.

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